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Chair: Mr. Haniff ..... (Malaysia)
later: Mr. Zelioli (Vice-Chair) ..... (Italy)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 28: Advancement of women (*continued*)

(a) Advancement of women (A/66/38, A/66/99, A/66/181, A/66/212 and A/66/215) (*continued*)

(b) Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (A/66/211) (*continued*)

1. **Ms. Kondolo** (Zambia) said that gender equality was a priority in her Government's long-term development plan. Gender-responsive legislation, socio-economic empowerment of women and gender mainstreaming were all integral components of State actions aimed at development. Her Government was incorporating the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women into domestic law. In addition, recent legislation on gender-based violence provided for criminalization of the act and protection of survivors, and established the State's responsibility for providing shelters for survivors. Several Government mechanisms made financial support available to women entrepreneurs and measures were in place to help rural women access education and land ownership. Nevertheless, the majority of women in Zambia, though active in the informal economy, were in need of economic opportunities.

2. Gender mainstreaming had been implemented within Government ministries and was required at all levels of the public sector. While recognizing that Governments were primarily responsible for the achievement of gender equality, her delegation urged the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) to become a strong presence and provide technical and financial assistance to Member States.

3. **Mr. Fiallo** (Ecuador) said that the Ecuadorian Constitution provided the legal basis for the protection of women's rights and set out the framework for achieving gender equality through gender mainstreaming and by enabling access to education and health care. It also provided for priority actions to guarantee the rights of persons who were vulnerable on multiple grounds, such as indigenous girls. A national council on gender equality worked to eliminate discrimination against women, promote parity as the basis for political participation and protect women against violence.

4. The Government had been working to provide de jure and de facto recognition of different types of families, with equal rights and opportunities. It also gave unpaid domestic workers access to social security and was promoting shared responsibility of men and women for family obligations. The interests and needs of women, including indigenous, mixed-race and Afro-descendent women, had been integrated into the State national plan and a gender perspective had been applied to national budgets. The Government also promoted the equitable representation of women in public office and leadership positions in the public sector.

5. His delegation commended the work of the Executive Director of UN-Women and welcomed the Entity's work to ensure the participation of Ecuador's indigenous women in the conservation and sustainable management of the Yasuní Biosphere Reserve. His Government was committed to integrating a gender perspective into macroeconomic policies in order to support women's full participation in the fields of education, science and technology.

6. **Mr. Gaspar Martins** (Angola) said that his Government had been focused on providing women with equal access to higher education, with incentives to pursue studies in the areas of science and technology. Women in Angola already had a strong presence in many professions traditionally dominated by men, including telecommunications, aviation, the military and law enforcement. His Government had submitted several reports on its implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and was striving to implement the resulting recommendations. Eradication of gender-based violence was a major priority in the national gender agenda, evidenced by the approval by the Parliament of a new law on domestic violence earlier that year. Skills training for rural women included a special focus on women with disabilities and single mothers.

7. His delegation welcomed the UN-Women strategic plan for 2011-2013, which was ambitious in scope owing to the Entity's consultations with stakeholders from various regions. His Government would be fully integrating the strategic plan into its national agenda on women's empowerment and strive to achieve its full implementation.

8. **Mr. Lindal** (Observer for the Sovereign Military Order of Malta) said that the Order of Malta focused on helping rural women, who had limited access to economic resources, were excluded from decision-making processes and performed a disproportionate share of unpaid work. Investing in that group had a multiplier effect on the productivity and economic growth of a community. Projects in the rural mountain region of Bolivia were helping families to improve their crop cultivation methods and sponsoring the education of young women, while a project in Viet Nam was providing women in an agricultural district with the skills to establish small businesses. Another project sought to improve the exercise of social and cultural rights among Afghan women by broadcasting educational television programmes on health, rights and other topics, featuring women presenters. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Order operated health centres that provided psychosocial assistance to women and girls who had suffered sexual violence during conflict. He drew attention to the plight of vulnerable migrant women and called on Member States to enhance law enforcement, protection and support of victims, and information sharing in order to eliminate discrimination against that group.

9. **Mr. Young** (Observer for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)) said that ICRC welcomed States' recent efforts to promote the well-being of women in situations of armed conflict. Women who headed households following the loss of a family member in conflict were a population of particular concern. Their ability to earn an income was often hampered by limited education, lack of skills and cultural traditions that prevented them from running a business. In addition, owing to their unclear legal status, the wives of missing men frequently found that their rights to property, access to basic services and custody of their children were in jeopardy. ICRC had responded to the needs of such women by providing relief distribution, microeconomic opportunities, psychosocial services and legal support. It also raised awareness of women's needs among authorities and supported the training of Government personnel in forensics and the collection of ante-mortem data in order to determine the fate of missing persons.

10. Women were also affected by the disruption of life-saving health-care services, such as vaccination and maternal care programmes, during times of general insecurity or violence. While ICRC had launched a project to address the problem, the health-care community alone could not address the challenges of ensuring access to health services in situations of armed conflict. States must recognize that violence that disrupted health-care delivery was a serious and widespread humanitarian challenge and devote focused attention to the issue, particularly through raising awareness among their armed forces and other authorities.

11. **Mr. Rohland** (Observer for the International Organization for Migration (IOM)) said that, while IOM recognized the vulnerability of women migrants to exploitation and gender-based violence, it believed that migration could be an empowering experience for women by expanding their livelihood opportunities. In that regard, the principle of safe and legal migration must be upheld in the policies of the States of origin, transit and destination. Concerning the Secretary-General's report on violence against women migrant workers (A/66/212), IOM welcomed the emphasis on the need to protect women migrant workers, in particular domestic workers. The legal and safe migration of such workers required gender-sensitive migration policies and cooperation between States. Concerning the Secretary-General's report on the status of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (A/66/99), he noted that IOM sought to advance general recommendation No. 26 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women by ensuring that migrant women were identified and supported by IOM projects. Migration policies that integrated a gender perspective helped to address discrimination against migrant women, ensure their rights and protect them from violence, regardless of their legal status.

12. As noted in the Secretary-General's report on rural women (A/66/181), rural women's responsibilities sometimes increased as a result of men migrating. Moreover, rural women wishing to migrate had limited access to information about legal migration opportunities, increasing their vulnerability to smugglers. Migrant women contributed to social and economic development and must therefore be considered in national development strategies.

13. **Ms. Christensen** (Observer for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)) said that women could be powerful drivers of resilience and development in the face of disasters, such as the current drought facing the Horn of Africa

and the typhoons affecting South-East Asia. Recent reports by IFRC and FAO had drawn attention to women's contributions to preventing hunger and malnutrition and the remarkable increase in food production that could result from investing in women farmers. She called on Member States to take steps in that regard and welcomed the emphasis to be placed on empowering rural women at the 2012 session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

14. IFRC had made the prevention of gender-based violence a priority in its 2011-2020 global strategy. The experience of IFRC national societies had inspired critical recommendations to guide the strategy. First, national budget resources must focus on interpersonal rather than collective violence. Second, both informal and formal education could be used to challenge gender stereotypes and discrimination and change violent behaviours. Third, involvement of men and community leaders was essential to implementation of legislation. Lastly, strategies to deal with violence must be adaptable to the strengths and needs of particular communities. The national societies of IFRC worked together with Governments in order to address violence with a holistic and coordinated approach.

15. **Mr. Motter** (Observer for the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)) said that, although the number of women parliamentarians had been increasing worldwide, at the current rate of progress the target of 30 per cent women's representation in the world's parliaments set in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action would not be reached until 2025. IPU welcomed the proposal for a draft resolution on women and political participation as a step to accelerate the achievement of the target and would value a text that identified specific targets to promote women's involvement in politics.

16. IPU encouraged the analysis and reform of States' legal and political framework as a means to increasing the level of women's participation. It had observed that Governments with more than 30 per cent female representation in their parliaments had a proportional list system for elections; implemented temporary special measures; or used periods of transition as an opportunity to reform discriminatory laws and practices. A State's constitution and its laws governing media, political parties and campaigns were also determining factors for women's election to parliaments.

17. Empowering women to participate in politics depended on their access to mentorship, political networks and funding. The Union promoted electoral processes that facilitated women's access to training, media and financial resources. Another priority was to encourage the development of gender-sensitive processes, such as leadership, rules, working hours and other conditions of work in parliaments.

18. The establishment of UN-Women would no doubt strengthen the United Nations focus on women's political participation. IPU would support and cooperate with such efforts in the years to come.

19. **Ms. Ratsifandrihamanana** (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) said that, since rural women contributed greatly to their communities and households, their economic empowerment would lead to their social and political advancement and improve the overall well-being of their families. The 2011 FAO *State of Food and Agriculture* report, which focused on women and agriculture, had found that in all developing countries female farmers had smaller plots of land and lower production yields than their male counterparts. That was owing to their lack of financial resources and access to training, which in turn limited their access to new technologies and other investments. Giving women farmers equal access to agricultural inputs and resources could increase their production by 20 to 30 per cent, which would reduce the number of undernourished people in the world by up to 17 per cent. Gender equality in agriculture would also improve health and education outcomes for children, ultimately contributing to long-term economic growth.

20. The FAO report offered recommendations to Governments, donors and development practitioners to close the gender gap, which included: accounting for gender differences in rural development policy; ensuring gender equality for rural women in law and in practice, including holding Government officials accountable; providing information and training to women and girls; and easing time constraints for women through provision of essential public services and improved technologies. The planned focus on empowering rural women at the upcoming session of the Commission on the Status of Women was evidence of Member States' political will to support rural women in becoming equal partners with men in development. FAO stood ready to support Governments in implementing strategies and programmes aimed at achieving that goal.

21. **Ms. Von Lilien** (International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)) said that the links between gender equality and socio-economic development were central to the work of IFAD to increase the food security and incomes of rural people in developing countries. Rural women not only accounted for half of the workforce in many countries; they also acted as caregivers, small business entrepreneurs and investors for rural families and societies. Yet they were often relegated to activities that were less productive and more time consuming and that paid less than those reserved for men. Entrenched gender roles also limited their mobility and access to education. Such inequalities had been found to be one of the reasons for the underperformance of the agricultural sector in many developing countries.

22. It was therefore important to build on complementarities between women and men in agricultural production and the rural economy and to engage men in promoting gender equality. Inclusive approaches, gender-balanced quotas and support for women innovators and community leaders would also help to increase agricultural productivity. IFAD sought to be a model for gender equality in its own practices and was developing a new gender policy to fulfil its commitments in that regard.

23. The Fund had identified priority actions to empower rural women, which included: tackling gender inequality in agricultural value chains; strengthening women's capacity to farm in a more sustainable and productive manner in the face of volatile climatic conditions; supporting women's inclusion in decision-making processes; and improving and increasing the use of sex-disaggregated data. The upcoming session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the timely implementation of the Millennium Development Goals must give greater attention to the role of rural women in development.

24. **Mr. Cassidy** (International Labour Organization (ILO)) said that ILO had advocated for women's empowerment in the labour sector by promoting international labour standards and the Decent Work Agenda. Investing in women's economic potential was critical to increasing productivity and growth. However, the global economic crisis was undermining progress made towards improving the status of women in the world of work. ILO had found that 47 per cent of women of working age worldwide were not economically active, which translated into wasted talent and loss of productive capacity.

25. Women were increasingly migrating in search of better work opportunities. Many women migrants became domestic workers, which offered them a source of livelihood but little formal protection from exploitation. In that regard, the recent adoption of the ILO Convention Concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers was an important step towards guaranteeing workers in the informal economy the same basic rights as other workers.

26. ILO research and policy guidance initiatives included the 2009 International Labour Conference resolution concerning gender equality at the heart of decent work, which noted that gender-sensitive policies were critical to ensuring that poor women were able to benefit from economic growth and recognized the importance of fostering women's entrepreneurship. Together with the World Health Organization, ILO was also coordinating a Social Protection Floor initiative, which promoted the development of social service schemes in developing countries to ensure basic services for those engaged in informal and casual work, a large percentage of whom were women.

27. The economic crisis had highlighted the need for greater gender equality in the labour market, which reduced a society's vulnerability to economic shocks. Despite advances in anti-discrimination legislation, the crisis had increased discrimination against migrant workers. In addition, women earned 70 per cent to 90 per cent of men's wages, while sexual harassment persisted as a significant problem in the workplace. ILO remained firmly committed to promoting gender equality and decent work for all.

Agenda item 65: Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*)

(a) Promotion and protection of the rights of children (A/66/41,* A/66/227, A/66/228, A/66/230, A/66/256 and A/66/257) (*continued*)

(b) Follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children (A/66/258) (*continued*)

28. **Mr. Kamau** (Kenya), speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that the Secretary-General's reports provided a useful overview of the progress

* To be issued.

made on the implementation of commitments to protect and promote children's rights.

29. In many African countries, progress was very slow. The Group welcomed the Secretary-General's proposal to take an equity-focused approach in order to fast track the attainment of commitments made during the special session and of the Millennium Development Goals. African countries considered the rights, welfare and protection of children to be of paramount importance to the overall agenda of human and social development. They had committed themselves individually and collectively to ensuring the protection, survival and development of children, in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

30. A programme of action adopted at the African Union (AU) Summit in 2008 included provisions to review progress every five years and to strengthen the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, which was monitoring the programme. In addition, it had been agreed to include children's issues in the African Peer Review Mechanism and to prepare a report on the state of Africa's children every two years. With UNICEF support, the AU had been able to enhance the capacity of the Committee and to issue a report on the state of Africa's children in 2008 and 2010 which showed an emerging trend to mainstream the rights and welfare of children into broader national and regional development frameworks.

31. The challenges facing girls were especially acute, including child and forced marriages, gender-based violence, abuse, exploitation, inadequate access to nutrition services, gender disparities and a lack of opportunities for participation. While some of those challenges were the result of parental inability to provide, others were due to harmful traditional practices. An AU conference held in Addis Ababa in October 2011 on overcoming harmful traditional practices had provided a platform for consultations on methods to combat such practices. The AU had likewise endorsed a draft resolution during the current session on female genital mutilation.

32. Promoting and protecting children's rights required that children should be provided with access to a safe living environment, to a quality basic education, to opportunities to develop individual capacities and to freedom from discrimination and poverty. Measures to foster economic growth and accelerate social development should therefore be encouraged through partnerships between countries, the United Nations and other international organizations.

33. **Mr. Goddard** (Barbados), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that the rights of children were paramount to the countries of the region, which continued to develop and implement programmes and policies aimed at the full realization of those rights.

34. Education had long been recognized as both a human right and a human need that allowed children to develop to their fullest potential, and in the majority of the region's countries primary education was universal, compulsory and free. Early childhood education had been given top priority as a means of taking advantage of the developmental opportunity offered by early childhood, and by 2015 at least 30 per cent of children under 2 and 100 per cent of children between 3 and 5 years of age would have access to quality early childhood education.

35. Most children in the region were born healthy and had access to good health services, as evidenced by high immunization and low infant mortality rates. There was also a renewed commitment to eliminate mother-to-child transmission of HIV and AIDS, and some countries had already done so through the provision of free anti-retroviral treatment to HIV-positive mothers. The promotion of healthy lifestyles to overcome factors such as obesity that contributed to non-communicable diseases was likewise a priority.

36. The Secretary-General's report on the status of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (A/66/230) painted a grim portrait of the fate of children with disabilities, who were even deprived of their most fundamental right to life. As principal sponsors of the 2011 draft resolution on the rights of the child, which focused on the rights of children with disabilities, the CARICOM countries continued to work to overcome social factors such as ignorance, prejudice and fear which lay at the heart of the discrimination faced by children with disabilities.

37. The majority of the countries of the region were signatories of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and they would continue to develop and implement policies and strategies to realize the rights of children with disabilities.

38. **Mr. Emvula** (Namibia), speaking on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), said that its member States were concerned about the fact that millions of children worldwide continued to live in poverty and were experiencing hunger, disease, abuse and exploitation, as well as limited access to education. They were also concerned about the lack of adequate social and economic safety nets for orphans and vulnerable children. In that respect, they were committed to the full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as evident from the introduction of programmes in national development plans and poverty reduction strategies, emphasizing health and education in particular.

39. The region, like many others, was experiencing a high incidence of communicable diseases, which greatly affected children and thwarted the development process. It had adopted a multisectoral HIV and AIDS strategy, to build national and regional capacity for effective monitoring of that scourge. Steady progress had been made within the context of a five-year plan for the operationalization of that strategy.

40. The region had also adopted a 10-year strategic plan of action to address another area of concern: the growth of trafficking in persons, especially women and children. In order to enhance the productive capacity of their people, member States were providing improved education and skills development, and promoting science, technology and entrepreneurship in particular.

41. Most national development plans included provisions for basic and inclusive education as a priority area to ensure sustainable development and poverty reduction. Moreover, the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education had been integrated into many national education plans in the region. SADC Governments' consultations with civil society and the private sector on the issue of education had become institutionalized. Nevertheless, he appealed to the international community to provide additional and adequate resources to help them to meet the goals set out in the plan of action adopted at the special session of the General Assembly on children (A/RES/S-27/2, annex).

42. SADC had sponsored a draft resolution on the girl child, as in previous years, and was committed to keeping the issue on the international agenda until the girl child occupied her equal place in all societies. He hoped the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

43. **Mr. Haji Samsuri** (Malaysia), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that regional cooperation for the survival, development, protection and participation of children in Southeast Asia had been an integral part of ASEAN's efforts to improve the lives of peoples in the region, eradicate the scourges of poverty, hunger and homelessness, and enhance the welfare and well-being of children. The Association's 2001 declaration on commitments for children was a guiding principle for enhancing the protection, development and survival of children in the region, as was its plan of action for children. Both initiatives were in line with the ASEAN Vision 2020 for a socially cohesive and caring region, adopted in 1997. In that respect, the well-being, development, empowerment and participation of women and children must be promoted in the ASEAN community-building process, in line with its Charter.

44. The ASEAN Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children took into consideration the different historical, political, sociocultural, religious and economic contexts in the region and the balance between rights and responsibilities. It aimed to promote the implementation of international, ASEAN and other instruments related to the rights of women and children, and to promote public awareness and education in that regard. It engaged in serious dialogue on the critical issues of gender equality and the rights of children in ASEAN with stakeholders including the Committees on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and on the Rights of the Child, UN-Women and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), in order to complement existing protocols. The Commission had been given the mandate to develop policies, programmes and innovative strategies, covering the right to quality education, trafficking in children, adolescent physical and mental health, and children affected by war or armed conflict.

45. A children's forum had been established within ASEAN, institutionalizing children's participation and giving them a regional voice. The first such forum had been held in the Philippines in October 2010, attended by 32 children from 13 to 20 years of age, including seven children with disabilities. That forum served as a bridge for communication between Governments and

children, helping to build a people-oriented ASEAN community.

46. At the international level, all ASEAN member States had ratified and were parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

47. **Ms. Schlyter** (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the candidate countries Croatia, Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the stabilization and association process countries and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia; and, in addition, Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that the member States of the European Union were required, under the Lisbon Treaty, to actively promote the rights of the child, while the Union's Charter of Fundamental Rights recognized that children were independent and autonomous rights holders. All European Union member States had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which would continue to guide European policies and actions impacting children's rights. The Union supported universal ratification of the Optional Protocols on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and the involvement of children in armed conflict, which were of utmost importance. In that regard, States should withdraw any reservations running counter to the Convention and its Optional Protocols. Also, it welcomed the adoption by the Human Rights Council in its resolution 17/18 of a third optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure.

48. The European Union had become a formal party to an international human rights treaty, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, for the first time in its history, in January 2011. Together with partners from the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, it would be sponsoring a draft resolution addressing both the rights of the child and of persons with disabilities, since children with disabilities tended to suffer multiple forms of discrimination. In February 2011, the Union had adopted an agenda for the rights of the child, which focused on child-friendly justice, protecting children in vulnerable situations and combating violence against children within and outside its borders. That agenda identified Roma children as a vulnerable group of children in the European Union and beyond. A European Union framework for national Roma integration strategies would guide national Roma policies and mobilize funds, with a focus on access to education, jobs, health care and housing.

49. The European Union was committed to eliminating all forms of violence against children, and would continue to implement its guidelines on the rights of the child and on violence against women and girls and combating all forms of discrimination against them. It was particularly concerned about the economic exploitation of children, and remained committed to eliminating the worst forms of child labour by 2016, including through the adoption of a number of initiatives to ensure that children who worked did so under conditions appropriate to their age and physical, mental and social development. A comprehensive approach was needed to tackle the root causes of the economic exploitation of children; in that respect, the European Union was endeavouring to strengthen partner countries' systems and capacities for delivering basic services without discrimination, including through universal birth registration, free, compulsory and universal primary education and access to basic health services.

50. The Union also called for the extension of the mandate of the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict. It reaffirmed its commitment to relevant Security Council resolutions and would continue to work towards implementation of the Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups.

51. To combat the worst crimes committed against children, including child prostitution, human trafficking, and child sex tourism, the Union had adopted a directive on human trafficking, and would also be adopting a directive on child sexual abuse, sexual exploitation and child pornography by the end of 2011. Furthermore, in June 2011, it had adopted a plan of action on gender equality and women's empowerment, which helped to combat gender-based violence and all forms of discrimination against women and girls worldwide. It had provided a grant of nearly 3 million euros to help improve the reproductive health of young people from 10 to 24 years of age, prevent early pregnancies and protect the health of young women and newborn children.

52. **Mr. Errázuriz** (Chile), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, said that the signing and ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional

Protocols should be a priority as that would significantly help to ensure that all children fully enjoyed their human rights and fundamental freedoms, and hoped that the office of the Special Representative on Violence against Children would receive the support needed to play its important role.

53. The Rio Group would continue to participate in negotiations on the omnibus draft resolution on the rights of the child and hoped that the Committee's deliberations on the rights of children with disabilities would help to make that issue a cross-cutting one on the United Nations agenda, so that States could focus on that group — which was disproportionately at risk of violence, neglect and abuse — and make its needs a priority in their national development policies and programmes. States should fully comply with relevant international conventions and recommendations, eliminate barriers to discrimination against children with disabilities and introduce the concept of "reasonable accommodation" for those children. It was particularly important to put an end to their segregation in schools and to develop an inclusive educational system.

54. The Group condemned the pernicious practice of the enforced disappearance of children, which denied those children their identity. He called on Member States to adopt the necessary measures to prevent the abduction of children and sanction perpetrators, and to work together to search for and identify victims of that practice and return them to their families, in line with relevant international agreements and legal procedures.

55. International cooperation and the promotion of development in all countries was key to enhancing children's participation, and supportive national policies were needed to promote their well-being. Civil society, the private sector and the media all had an important role to play in the promotion and protection of the rights of the child, and the policies and actions adopted on issues affecting children must take into account the best interest of the child and incorporate a gender perspective.

56. The Rio Group was deeply concerned about the vulnerability of children who were victims of trafficking, sexual exploitation, rape, abuse, sale of organs, sexual tourism and child pornography, a situation which was exacerbated in the context of poverty, social inequality, discrimination, migration, insecurity and organized crime. It was critical to tackle the underlying causes of those practices, and the Rio Group was committed to fulfilling the objectives of the Rio de Janeiro Declaration and Call for Action to Prevent and Stop Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents.

57. Despite efforts to curb violence against children, that scourge was still widespread. It was particularly important to protect children in special circumstances such as those who travelled unaccompanied, were forced to work, had been given death sentences, or who were victims of trafficking. The Rio Group was committed to working with the United Nations on raising international standards, strengthening and consolidating existing international instruments and mechanisms, fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals related to children and the declaration and plan of action for "A World Fit for Children".

58. **Ms. Horsington** (Australia), speaking on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand, said that while much had been achieved over the past decade towards the promotion and protection of children, many fundamental challenges remained, as millions of children throughout the world continued to live in poverty and lacked adequate food, shelter and access to health and education. The famine in the Horn of Africa, where as many as 15 out of 10,000 under the age of 5 died each day, was a disaster of monumental proportions which demanded the collective resolve of Member States.

59. Homelessness among children severely impacted those children's development and risked placing them on a path to lifelong disadvantage. It was thus welcome news that at its March 2012 session the Human Rights Council would be focusing on the rights of children working or living in the street. Canada, Australia and New Zealand also welcomed the focus on children with disabilities in the draft resolution to be considered by the Committee, and were pleased to have contributed to the discussion on involving youth through dialogue and mutual understanding at the United Nations high-level meeting on youth, and called for continuing that dialogue. Since girls faced particular challenges, as they were at greater risk of being exposed to and encountering various forms of discrimination and violence, Member States were urged to support the proclamation of an international day of the girl child by the General Assembly, especially as evidence had shown that investing in girls yielded better

development results than investing in any other demographic group.

60. Lastly, with regard to the use and abuse of children in armed conflict, the three countries welcomed the adoption of Security Council resolution 1998 (2011) expanding the listing criteria for the monitoring and reporting mechanism to include recurrent attacks on schools and/or hospitals and against protected persons in relations to schools and/or hospitals as grave violations committed against children in armed conflict, and commended the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict.

61. **Ms. Maina** (Nigeria) said that her country had made considerable progress towards the promotion and protection of the rights of the child, notably through its accession to all major international instruments on the matter, and development of appropriate national legislation and policies. Its 2003 national act on child rights was based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. That act was already being adopted and implemented by a number of Nigerian States and efforts were ongoing to ensure its implementation throughout the country. It included provisions for a new justice administration mechanism for children, as well as prohibition of female genital mutilation, street vending, early marriage of girls and trafficking of children. Its implementation was being monitored by a committee comprising representatives of the Nigerian Government, United Nations agencies, development partners, civil society and non-governmental organizations, and community-level child protection networks would sensitize caregivers on what constituted abuse, and help to identify abused children and to prosecute offenders.

62. As there were an estimated 17 million orphans and vulnerable children in Nigeria, a five-year national action plan had been adopted to increase their access to health, nutrition and education, and was being reviewed in the light of best practices around the world.

63. Her Government was doing its utmost to prevent internal and cross-border trafficking. A national agency for the prohibition of trafficking in persons, rehabilitated trafficked persons and prosecuted traffickers. The Government had signed an agreement with the International Labour Organization and the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour to set up shelters for the rehabilitation and reintegration of rescued trafficked children with their families.

64. In spite of the steady progress made towards providing equal educational opportunities for boys and girls, girls still made up more than half of the nation's out-of-school children. Various strategies had thus been put in place to enhance the education opportunities of the girl child, including programmes to promote their literacy and enhance their vocational training and skills acquisition, recruitment of more female teachers and grants to parents of girls. A number of Nigerian States had adopted laws to facilitate the school enrolment and retention of girls.

65. Lastly, a children's parliament had been set up at the national and State levels serving as a platform to give Nigerian children a voice in the conduct of their affairs and those of their community and country, helping them to contribute directly to policymaking and implementation, and thus to national development.

66. **Mr. Frick** (Liechtenstein) said that his Government had ratified the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict and fully supported the mandate of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. As an active member of the Group of Friends of Children and Armed Conflict, his Government reiterated its support for Security Council resolution 1998 (2011) on children and armed conflict and welcomed the expansion of the Council's monitoring and reporting mechanism to include attacks on schools and hospitals. It was the responsibility of States to prosecute those responsible for grave violations against children in armed conflicts, and the International Criminal Court played a complementary role when States failed to fulfil that responsibility.

67. In the context of the draft third optional protocol, there should be a complaints procedure for violations of children's rights and an inquiry procedure for grave or systematic violations. However, the opt-out option in the context of inquiries was regrettable. Also, it would have been preferable to have a collective rather than an individual complaints procedure, although fortunately the latter did not place restrictions on who could file a communication on behalf of a child or group of children. Lastly, he welcomed the focus of the

Secretary-General's report on implementing the rights of children with disabilities.

68. *Mr. Zelioli (Italy), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

69. **Mr. Sinhaseni** (Thailand) said that his Government had recently amended a number of laws in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and had withdrawn its reservation to article 7 of the Convention to allow birth registration for all children, regardless of nationality. Its 2003 Child Protection Act and a 2010 act for juveniles and family were examples of the progress made in preventing and responding to violence against children. His Government had achieved Goal 2 of the Millennium Development Goals and provided 15 years of free education for all, from kindergarten to high school, regardless of nationality. Its act for the education of persons with disabilities reaffirmed those persons' right to education at all levels, and special education centres for children with disabilities had been set up in every province to enhance their quality of life and allow them to go to school with other children.

70. Domestic violence, child pornography, child sexual abuse, trafficking in persons and involvement with narcotic drugs required effective law enforcement as well as awareness-raising efforts, particularly in rural areas, and it was crucial to ensure that law enforcement officials were sensitized to issues involving children. A subcommittee had been set up in Thailand to oversee planning and policies to prevent the trafficking in persons linked with child tourism, and crisis centres focusing especially on girls and the prevention of early pregnancy had been set up, as had telephone hotlines and public and private shelters for children who were abused or at risk of abuse.

71. In Thailand, children and youth were encouraged to participate in dedicated councils as a forum for exchange and for their involvement in policymaking processes.

72. Cooperation from all stakeholders — Governments, international organizations, the private sector and civil society — was required to ensure the protection of children. He welcomed efforts being undertaken within the United Nations system to strengthen child protection systems, and to provide technical assistance and assistance with treaty compliance. Mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels, including through the United Nations, must be strengthened to ensure more coordinated, consolidated and effective support, particularly in light of the current economic constraints.

73. **Mr. Rakovski** (Russian Federation) said that the future of the international community depended to a large extent on the level of preparation that children had upon reaching autonomy. His Government supported stronger international cooperation in the promotion and protection of the rights of children, particularly in the context of the ongoing global financial crisis, taking guidance primarily from the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the goals stated in the outcome document of the twenty-seventh special session of the General Assembly on children, entitled "A World Fit for Children".

74. Ensuring the physical and mental health of children and the fulfilment of their intellectual and creative potential was a social policy priority for his Government and was a component of nearly all national programmes. His Government was rigorous in its compliance with the relevant international legal norms and its reporting obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict and was moving towards participating in the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. The Russian Federation had recently increased criminal liability for crimes against minors and lengthened prison sentences for sexual crimes against minors. There was rigorous oversight to ensure that convicted paedophiles served out their sentences and the President had recently proposed amendments to the Criminal Code that increased penalties for paedophilia.

75. As a result of rapid technological development, children were absorbing great quantities of information and advertisement starting from an early age, and there were calls by civil society for measures to protect children from violent television and video content. In response, his Government had accepted the responsibility for protecting children and teenagers from harmful content by adopting or amending legislation pertaining to the rights of children, mass media and advertising.

76. Special attention was being paid to meeting the needs of children and teenagers with limited opportunities and those without parental care, preventing child abandonment and supporting foster families. A State commission, which worked closely

with a number of non-governmental organizations, was overseeing the implementation of an inclusive education programme for children with disabilities in the public school system and working to prevent neglect and violation of the rights of minors. The commissioner for the rights of the child had broad oversight powers with regard to the protection of children's rights and the related work of State and non-governmental institutions, notably international adoptions, and had established regional offices throughout the country. Thus, the promotion and protection of the rights of children had been taken up at the highest levels of Government.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.

United Nations A/C.3/66/SR.16

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Chair: Mr. Haniff ..... (Malaysia)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 27: Social development (*continued*)

(b) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*) (A/C.3/66/L.6 and L.14)

Draft resolution A/C.3/66/L.6: Tenth anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers

1. **Mr. Quintaes** (Brazil), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/66/L.6 also on behalf of Japan, said that he hoped that all Member States would join in the effort to promote volunteerism, which was playing an increasingly important role worldwide, as a means of combating discrimination, addressing humanitarian crises and building a more peaceful environment for all.

2. **Mr. Gustafik** (Secretary of the Committee) announced that Finland, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Panama and Peru had joined the sponsors.

Draft resolution A/C.3/66/L.14: Brain Education as a tool for implementing the Millennium Development Goals and contributing to global peace and development

3. **Mr. García González** (El Salvador), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/66/L.14, said that education must be approached in a holistic manner, as it was indispensable for the achievement of sustainable development and international peace. Taking into account the responsibility of States to promote a culture of peace, his delegation had decided to sponsor the draft resolution, which alluded to his country's successful use of Brain Education, a holistic type of education that raised awareness about the great potential of the human brain and its natural desire to solve the world's problems.

4. **Mr. Gustafik** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Panama had joined the sponsors.

Agenda item 107: Crime prevention and criminal justice (*continued*) (A/C.3/66/L.15 and L.17)

Draft resolution A/C.3/66/L.15: Strengthening the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme, in particular its technical cooperation capacity

5. **Mr. Mogini** (Italy), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/66/L.15 on behalf of sponsors Albania, Mexico, Montenegro, Norway, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Uruguay, said that important new issues had been addressed in the draft resolution, including trafficking in cultural property, juvenile delinquency and the achievements of recent General Assembly sessions, such as the adoption of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. As in previous sessions, the sponsors were counting on the widest possible support from Member States.

6. **Mr. Gustafik** (Secretary of the Committee) announced that Benin, Finland, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, Kyrgyzstan, Luxembourg, Morocco, Panama, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia and Slovenia had become sponsors of the draft resolution.

Draft resolution A/C.3/66/L.17: United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders

7. **Ms. Kafeero** (Uganda), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/66/L.17 on behalf of the African Group, said that the text updated General Assembly resolution 65/231 on the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI). The African Group continued to maintain that the justification for the establishment of UNAFRI was the need to address the spectre of crime and delinquency in Africa and prevent them from subverting development gains. The Group was ready to engage in constructive discussions on the text and hoped that the draft resolution would, as in previous years, be adopted by consensus.

Agenda item 108: International drug control (*continued*) (A/C.3/66/L.16)

Draft resolution A/C.3/66/L.16: International cooperation against the world drug problem

8. **Mr. Arrocha** (Mexico), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/66/L.16, said that Albania, Brazil, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Norway, Ukraine and Uruguay had joined the sponsors. The draft resolution aimed to maintain the international community's commitment to combating the world drug problem, and the text had been updated and enriched with direct references to discussions and thematic resolutions from the session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs held in March 2011. Noting the

increased influence of criminal organizations involved in illicit drug trafficking around the world, he stressed the importance of not only recognizing the link between drug trafficking and weapons trafficking but also of strengthening measures and mechanisms aimed at combating both phenomena in an integrated manner.

9. **Mr. Gustafik** (Secretary of the Committee) announced that Haiti, Honduras, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Panama, Paraguay and Peru had become sponsors of the draft resolution.

Agenda item 27: Social development (*continued*)

(b) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*) (A/C.3/66/L.9)

Draft resolution A/C.3/66/L.9: Cooperatives in social development

10. **The Chair** invited the Committee to take action on draft resolution A/C.3/66/L.9.

11. **Ms. Ochir** (Mongolia) said that, since the introduction of the draft resolution, Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Colombia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Myanmar, Netherlands, Panama, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania, St. Lucia, Spain, Slovenia, Thailand and the United States of America had become sponsors.

12. A number of changes had been made as a result of constructive informal consultations and bilateral meetings with Member States. In the second preambular paragraph, in the fourth line, the word "major" was replaced with the word "significant". In paragraph 4, the phrase "and international organizations, in partnership with cooperatives and cooperative organizations" was inserted after the word "Governments". In paragraph 8, the phrase "while promoting gender equality and empowerment of women" was inserted after the word "members". She called for the draft resolution to be adopted by consensus, as in previous years.

13. **Mr. Gustafik** (Secretary of the Committee) announced that Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Egypt, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Kenya, Lebanon, Madagascar, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Paraguay, the Philippines, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Serbia, Slovakia, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland had joined the sponsors.

14. *Draft resolution A/C.3/66/L.9, as amended, was adopted.*

Agenda items 107: Crime prevention and criminal justice (*continued*) **and 108: International drug control** (*continued*) (A/C.3/66/L.2 and L.3)

Draft resolution A/C.3/66/L.2: Strengthening international cooperation in combating the harmful effects of illicit financial flows resulting from criminal activities

15. **The Chair** invited the Committee to take action on draft resolution A/C.3/66/L.2, which had been recommended for adoption by the Economic and Social Council.

16. **Mr. Gustafik** (Secretary of the Committee), presenting a statement of programme budget implications in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, said that the adoption of paragraph 11 would entail extrabudgetary resources in the amount of $186,500 to develop a new data collection instrument. The level of resource requirements would provide for consultations with regional and international organizations in the development of a new questionnaire, as well as 10 work-months of temporary assistance at the P-3 level to update the data collection system and to process and disseminate the additional information, and the editing and translation of new questions to be attached to the existing questionnaire. With regard to paragraphs 12 and 13, the implementation of the Global Programme against Money-Laundering was reliant on the provision of extrabudgetary resources.

17. With regard to the requests contained in paragraph 14, there was currently no dedicated research capacity at the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). A request for the Office to undertake more systematic research on the financial dimension of transnational organized crime would require the establishment of a research officer post in Vienna at the P-3 level. The provision of $162,900 per year in additional extrabudgetary resources was proposed to cover that requirement.

18. Additional extrabudgetary funding was also required to strengthen the Global Programme against Money-Laundering in line with the 11 recommendations made by the Independent Evaluation Unit in its review of the Programme. An estimated $1.5 million in additional funding would be required for both field and essential headquarters operations. Should the additional extrabudgetary resources not be provided, the activities would not take place.

19. *Draft resolution A/C.3/66/L.2 was adopted.*

Draft resolution A/C.3/66/L.3: Technical assistance for implementing the international conventions and protocols related to counter-terrorism

20. **The Chair** invited the Committee to take action on draft resolution A/C.3/66/L.3, which had been recommended for adoption by the Economic and Social Council.

21. **Mr. Gustafik** (Secretary of the Committee), presenting a statement of programme budget implications in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, said that the adoption of paragraphs 1 through 8 of the draft resolution would require additional extrabudgetary resources for the provision of technical assistance in implementing the international conventions and protocols related to terrorism. Voluntary contributions in the amount of $7 million had been received for activities related to the Terrorism Prevention Branch. The level of extrabudgetary requirements for 2011 needed to include the Branch's expanded regional and country programmes based on increased requests from Member States. Hence, the full implementation of the activities set out in paragraphs 1 through 8 would be subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources. A relatively small element of the activities would be carried out drawing on the regular budget allocations suggested in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013. As concerned the provisions contained in paragraphs 1 and 11, the resource requirements for the biennium 2012-2013 had been presented in the context of established budgetary procedures. The adoption of draft resolution A/C.3/66/L.3 would therefore not entail any additional appropriations under the programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011.

22. *Draft resolution A/C.3/66/L.3 was adopted.*

Agenda item 107: Crime prevention and criminal justice (*continued*) (A/C.3/66/L.4 and L.5)

Draft resolution A/C.3/66/L.4: Follow-up to the Twelfth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and preparations for the Thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

23. **The Chair** invited the Committee to take action on draft resolution A/C.3/66/L.4, which had been recommended for adoption by the Economic and Social Council. The draft resolution contained no programme budget implications.

24. *Draft resolution A/C.3/66/L.4 was adopted.*

Draft resolution A/C.3/66/L.5: Strengthening crime prevention and criminal justice responses to protect cultural property, especially with regard to its trafficking

25. **The Chair** invited the Committee to take action on draft resolution A/C.3/66/L.5, which had been recommended for adoption by the Economic and Social Council.

26. **Mr. Gustafik** (Secretary of the Committee), presenting a statement of programme budget implications in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, said that adoption of paragraphs 3 and 8 would require $244,400 in additional extrabudgetary resources in order to convene one intergovernmental expert group meeting in Vienna, meeting for a total of 10 meetings with interpretation services in the six official languages of the United Nations. The level of resource requirements would include the production of a report on the recommendations of the working group and consultancy services. With regard to paragraph 9 (a), $335,000 in additional extrabudgetary resources would be required for the development of specific guidelines for crime prevention with respect to trafficking in cultural property, and would provide for consultancy services, an expert group meeting in Vienna with 20 experts over three days with no interpretation services. The documentation requirements would include the recommendations of the expert groups. Additional extrabudgetary resources would also be required to undertake the feasibility study on the collection of data on trafficking in cultural property requested in paragraph 9 (b). The activities would not take place if the additional extrabudgetary resources were not provided.

27. *Draft resolution A/C.3/66/L.5 was adopted.*

Agenda item 65: Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*)

(a) Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*) (A/66/41, A/66/227, A/66/228, A/66/230, A/66/256 and A/66/257)

(b) Follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children (*continued*) (A/66/258)

28. **Ms. Medal** (Nicaragua) said that her country was implementing a National Human Development Plan, which established strategies and actions to develop human capabilities, restore rights, and eliminate social exclusions and inequities. Youth and adolescence were being given priority, since half the population was under 18.

29. The "Programa Amor" programmes were directed toward restoration of the rights of the child to live in normal family conditions and without risks outside the home; establishment and licensing of 55 child development centres for care of children of working mothers; birth registration for all children; the right to specialized attention for children and adolescents with disabilities; and care of children in 559 community childcare centres and 587 community health centres.

30. The Ministry of Education had adopted education policies designed to provide more and better education through an improved curriculum. The goal was for primary education to become universal by 2012 and basic secondary education by 2015.

31. The quality of health-care services, which were free, had been improved and services had been expanded. Infant and maternal mortality had been decreased by 15.7 per cent from 2006 to 2010 and child malnutrition from 21.4 per cent in 2003 to 19.6 per cent in 2009. In 2010 the Comprehensive School Nutrition Programme provided food to a million children between the ages of 6 and 12.

32. The Government was implementing a plan to eliminate child labour and protect working adolescents. The Roadmap for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour for the elimination of child labour by the year 2020 was in the final stages of development.

33. The Penal Code approved in 2007 penalized all forms of violence, punishment, and abuse of children and adolescents. Article 100 of the 2006 General Education Law specified that students had the right to be treated fairly, with respect, and without punishment.

34. The Office of the Attorney General for the Defence of Human Rights, acting through the Special Representative for Childhood and Adolescence, sponsored the establishment of the Group for the Sponsorship of Proper Treatment of Childhood and Adolescence, composed of various government institutions, international cooperation agencies, and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

35. **Ms. Man** Anting (China) said that the 2011 evaluation of the implementation of the Outline Programme for the Development of Chinese Children 2001-2010 concluded that the goals and objectives of the Outline had been largely achieved. Mortality rates for infants and for children under five had dropped from 32.2 per thousand and 39.7 per thousand in 2000 to 13.1 per thousand and 16.4 per thousand, respectively; the inoculation rate of vaccines covered by the national vaccination plan had exceeded 90 per cent. The gross kindergarten enrolment rate had risen from 35 per cent in 2000 to 56.6 per cent; the net primary-school enrolment rate had reached 99.7 per cent, and gross enrolment rates for junior high and high school were 100.1 per cent and 82.5 per cent, respectively.

36. The Outline for the Development of Chinese Children 2011-2020, issued in August 2011, contained a series of general goals, including improvement of the primary health-care system for children, greater equity in access to the primary public education, and establishment and improvement of a children's welfare system. Mortality rates for infants and children under five were to be kept under 10 per thousand and 13 per thousand, respectively; the inoculation rate of vaccines included in the national vaccination plan was to reach 95 per cent; coverage of nine-year compulsory education was to be consolidated at 95 per cent; high-school education was to be made universal and reach 90 per cent of the gross enrolment rate; and centres to provide services for children were to be built in over 90 per cent of urban and rural communities.

37. China was party to various international treaties for protection of the rights of the child and was fulfilling its treaty obligations. It had been involved in the drafting of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

38. **Ms. Razzouk** (United States of America) said that in the past decade her country had implemented national reforms to address problems of children's access to education, health care and nutrition, and to protect children from violence, abuse, and exploitation. Federal, state, and local programmes existed to protect children from child pornography, commercial sexual exploitation and forced labour, and to promote access to health care, foster care, and education.

39. The 2009 Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act provided funding to strengthen programmes and expand coverage, to some 11 million children. In line with the theme of children with disabilities, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) required public schools to make free and appropriate public education available to all eligible children. The Teacher Education Assistance for College and Education (TEACH) Grant Program helped fund the education of persons pursuing degrees in special-needs education. The United States hoped to continue working closely with the international community to strengthen the protection of all children.

40. **Ms. Mørch Smith** (Norway) said that children with disabilities had been entitled to mainstream primary education in Norway since 1975. Attendance at primary school through grade ten was compulsory, and all persons had a right to higher secondary education. Norway had closed residential institutions for persons with disabilities in 1991, in the belief that persons with disabilities should be mainstreamed into all aspects of life.

41. The Special Representative had noted in her report that 80 per cent of children with disabilities lived in developing countries, where primary education coverage tended to be insufficient. Unless Government policies and international development cooperation included those children in their plans, there would be another generation of persons with disabilities who would remain excluded from society. Tackling violence against children in schools, especially children with disabilities who were more vulnerable, was also an urgent issue, and in June 2011 Norway had hosted a High-Level Expert Meeting on "Tackling violence in schools", including violence against children with disabilities.

42. **Ms. Fahmy** (Egypt) said that Egypt was among the countries that had supported the United Nations Study on Violence against Children and had contributed to deepening the culture of opposition to violence in the Arab World by hosting three regional meetings in Cairo and funding the dissemination of an Arabic version of the study.

43. Egypt condemned involvement of children as combatants or victims in armed conflicts, and believed that violations should be criminalized and the perpetrators prosecuted. It also believed that access to education and health care was a basic right of every child, and that access to both, in a safe and secure environment, must be guaranteed. Egypt also rejected any attacks directed against schools and hospitals.

44. In the past two decades, Egypt had been developing a comprehensive protective legislative framework covering education of girls, health (including child mortality and female genital mutilation) and child protection, and focused on children with disabilities, rural children, and children at risk. The country still lacked a comprehensive database on the magnitude of the problems, and faced challenges related to national development programs.

45. Priorities for the immediate future included developing and improving educational curricula and textbooks, combating the problem of school drop-outs and all forms of violence against children, and strengthening child helpline mechanisms to ensure better response to all forms of exploitation, discrimination, and violence.

46. **Ms. Ndhlovu** (Zambia) said that the outcome document of the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Children, held in 2002, constituted a useful guide to steps that needed to be taken in respect of children.

47. Zambia had a National Child Policy and a National Plan of Action, which constituted core guidelines. It had made progress toward establishment of a National Council for the Child, and the pertinent legislation would soon be considered by Parliament.

48. Measures had been taken for the prevention of violence against women and children, including the recent enactment of the Anti-Gender-Based Violence Act, which provided a mechanism for protecting children from violence, including via safe houses and victim rehabilitation facilities. The Zambia Police Service had two units for dealing with that issue.

49. The National Child Policy had been revised to incorporate issues of sexual and labour exploitation,

and the Penal Code had been amended to cover offences relating to child pornography, cultural practices harmful to children, strengthening of the penalty against defilement (defined as sex with a person under age 16) and stiffer penalties for child trafficking and child prostitution. An Anti-Human Trafficking Act had been enacted in 2008, and the Government had undertaken a comprehensive review of all child-related laws and policies to ensure that they guaranteed better protection.

50. Steps had been taken to reduce morbidity and mortality in children and to integrate HIV/AIDS education into the school curriculum. A National Policy on Disability had been developed and had been submitted to stakeholders for consultation. It included a mechanism for collecting disaggregated statistical data on children with disabilities, to enable the Government to develop targeted programmes. A special needs education programme for disabled children had been developed to mainstream them into the regular school systems.

51. **Mr. Ledergerber** (Switzerland) said his country supported the Human Rights Committee recommendation concerning adoption of the third Optional Protocol to the Convention, which could provide a communications procedure.

52. Switzerland recommended the use of telephone hotlines to assist children and parents, and the organization of parent training sessions to spread educational practices based on respect for the child, the rights of the child and the rejection of violence in all its forms. It condemned attacks targeting schools and hospitals.

53. **Ms. Heshiki** (Japan) said that the Government of Japan intended to make further efforts to strengthen and implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols.

54. Steps taken toward achievement of the MDGs included financial commitments to support "EMBRACE", a .maternal and child health support model to provide a continuum of care from pregnancy to the post-natal period, and "School for All", a basic education support model designed to improve the overall learning environment.

55. In recent years, as part of its international cooperation for the protection of children, the Government had adopted the "Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons" and the "Comprehensive Measures to Eliminate Child Pornography". It had been taking steps, including amending of laws, to prevent, identify, and deal with child abuse in its early stages. In 2011 the Civil Code had been amended to introduce suspension of parents' rights in serious child-abuse cases and appointment of guardians.

56. **Ms. Arias** (Cuba) said that Cuba had been implementing policies, actions, and programmes in favour of children and adolescents since its revolution in 1959. Economic, political, and social transformations since then had facilitated eradication of structural injustices.

57. Cuba was spending more than 50 per cent of the State budget on health care, education, welfare, social security and culture with educational expenses accounting for 19.4 per cent of the country's total expenditures in 2011. There were 396 special schools for children with disabilities.

58. Mothers and children were given priority attention: primary health care and hospital infrastructure were being integrated, children were being vaccinated against 13 communicable diseases, and congenital diseases were being detected at an early stage. Purchase of medicines and equipment for children, however, was being impeded by the United States Government blockade. Cuban children continued to be innocent victims of that policy, which had been rejected by the international community for over half a century.

59. **Mr. Al-Awadhi** (Yemen) said that his country was among the first to accede to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its optional protocols and was working to implement them by fulfilling its reporting obligations and enacting and revising domestic child protection laws. Institutional mechanisms established to implement those laws included a council on motherhood and childhood, a technical commission to combat child smuggling and a nationwide child protection network. His Government was also cooperating with international organizations to protect and advance the rights of children, as evinced by a number of successes attained despite its limited resources and difficult circumstances. Yemen had been declared a polio-free country in 2008 and conducted vaccination campaigns regularly. Moreover, a national strategy and plan of action against child trafficking had been put in place. His delegation reiterated its

commitment to promoting the rights of children, also stressing the necessity of redoubled international efforts to that end.

60. **Mr. Botbaev** (Kyrgyzstan) said that his Government had put in place laws to protect the fundamental rights of children of both genders to life, survival and growth, especially socially disadvantaged children, such as refugee children and orphans. Kyrgyzstan had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its optional protocols, and had since taken steps to incorporate their provisions into domestic legislation. Moreover, a social protection strategy specifically addressed the needs of families and children living in difficult circumstances.

61. His Government had enacted legislation to regulate the adoption of children who had been deprived of parental care, in addition to establishing a database to ensure their protection. An annual award was established to recognize projects in the area of child protection services. Intensive efforts were being made to improve and revise child protection legislation, which aimed to guarantee the rights of children to parental care and family love.

62. **Ms. Alsaleh** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the best interests of children were a fundamental policy consideration for her Government, given the importance it attached to caring for and protecting children in all areas of life. The Syrian Arab Republic had hosted the Special Olympics in 2010, as well as a forum for Arab youth to discuss the recommendations of the Second Arab Plan on Childhood (2004-2015). The youth forum had recommended that the protection of children living under foreign occupation should be added as an element of the plan, and that an Arab cooperation fund should be established to build the capacity of those children, in order to ensure that their welfare was central in discussions and reports presented by Arab states to the relevant international entities.

63. Locally, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour was working with the International Labour Organization (ILO) to implement the national programme to eliminate the worst forms of child labour. Eradicating that phenomenon by the recently set target of 2016 would make Syria a model in that regard. The Ministry of Education, in cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) had recently established a regional early child development centre in Damascus.

64. The situation of human rights, especially of children, in the occupied Syrian Golan remained a matter of grave concern. Children were not spared the rights violations committed by Israel, nor its desperate attempts to wipe out the Arab identity of the occupied people and replace it with its own using compulsory educational curricula. Israel had refused Syrian attempts to provide educational, health and social services to its occupied brethren through international humanitarian organizations, in addition to obstructing the work of international commissions sent to monitor the suffering of families in the region. The international community must persistently condemn and combat all criminal measures taken by the Israeli occupying forces, endeavour to detect and remove landmines and cluster bombs that killed innocent children in Palestine, Lebanon and the Syrian Golan, and end the blockade on the Gaza Strip, which had led to a sharp rise in the child death toll.

65. **Ms. De** (India), noting that 44 per cent of her country's population was under 18, said it had developed a National Charter for Children and a National Plan of Action for Children. Free and compulsory education up to the age of 14 had been declared a fundamental right, and private schools received funding to reserve 25 per cent of their seats for children from economically disadvantaged sectors. An Integrated Child Development Services Scheme was focused on early childhood care and education. A National Commission for Protection of Children's Rights had been established in 2007 to provide for speedy trial of offenders who committed crimes against children and violated their rights. Furthermore, civil society was considered to be an active and integral part of the child protection framework.

66. Eradication of child labour was a priority for the Government, and employment of children under 14 was strictly prohibited. The holistic approach to the issue included measures to improve education, health care and nutrition for children.

67. The Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) had been launched in 2009 to create a safe environment for children needing care or protection, children in conflict with the law and any other vulnerable child. It included programmes for juvenile justice, street children and for assistance to homes to promote

in-country adoption. It aimed to provide better quality and more accessible child protection services, raise public awareness about child rights, articulate responsibilities and enforce accountability for child protection, and establish functioning governmental structures for delivery of services to children.

68. In 2009, 24 January had been designated "National Girl Child Day", and other initiatives had been taken to enhance the status of girl children, including policies banning sex-selective abortion and child marriage.

69. **Mr. Elbahi** (Sudan) said that building a world fit for children would remain an elusive goal for developing countries without a proper balance between economic and development concerns and the support of industrialized nations. A party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its optional protocols, the Sudan had incorporated their provisions into the domestic legal framework, notably in a 2010 law on children and various child protection mechanisms established at the federal and state levels. Moreover, child protection units had been created in the police and the armed forces, the latter being tasked with preventing the recruitment of children into armed conflict within military institutions. His Government was also conducting popular education campaigns to sensitize communities, particularly rural ones, to the importance of such issues affecting children as nutrition, education, protection from violence and defence of the legal rights of the child. All child protection efforts were being made in constant cooperation with the relevant United Nations agencies working in the Sudan, particularly the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Statistics showed a significant reduction in child mortality rates and acts of violence against children.

70. Despite considerable improvements in the situation of children in the areas of the Sudan covered by the relevant reports of the Secretary-General and of his Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, the rebellion movements in Darfur, Kordofan and the Blue Nile regions continued to force minors to participate in military operations. For its part, his Government was committed to continued cooperation with all United Nations agencies to further ameliorate the situation of children in armed conflict.

71. His Government's participation in the ongoing negotiations on the Darfur conflict in Doha, Qatar, which had brought together all parties desiring peace, attested to the Sudan's commitment to resolving the conflict. The establishment of a transitional authority for Darfur heralded a new age of peace in the region, and a broad Darfur-Darfur dialogue would complement that effort. Normalization of relations with neighbouring Chad and military border operations conducted jointly by the two countries had had the greatest impact on improving the situation and protecting civilians, especially children. The developments in Libya further contributed to that process and benefited the children of Darfur.

72. Other instances of his Government's painstaking efforts to consolidate national and regional peace included the mooring of a peace ship in South Sudan to affirm the Sudan's full recognition of the fledgling State after decades of civil war, and the training of officials in South Sudan.

73. Noting with dismay the impact of foreign debt on the situation of children in the developing world, he called for debt cancellation for developing countries. He also expressed grave concern at the increase in attacks on the dignity and rights of children in occupied Arab territories and reiterated his delegation's support for the establishment of a sovereign State of Palestine with full United Nations membership, so as to ensure the full exercise of the rights of the child and of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination.

74. **Mr. Yahiaoui** (Algeria) noted that his country was party to the principal international instruments concerning promotion of the rights of the child, including the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and its protocol on trafficking in persons. Algeria would shortly be presenting its third and fourth periodic reports on implementation of the international Convention on the Rights of the Child.

75. Various draft laws included provisions to ensure better support and more effective protection of the rights of the child. The Government had adopted a National Family Strategy, a National Plan for Childhood, and a national strategy to combat violence against children, in collaboration with UNICEF. An amendment to the Algerian Nationality Code recognized transmission of Algerian nationality via the mother.

76. Algeria was working to combat child labour, exploitation of children for purposes of prostitution, trafficking, particularly of girls, and the use of computer equipment to disseminate child pornography.

The Penal Code prosecuted and punished abandonment, sexual acts and rape involving children, and exploitation of children in prostitution networks.

77. Infant mortality had been reduced from 34.7 per thousand in 2002 to 25.5 per thousand in 2010. The Government was continuing its efforts to further reduce those rates. Investment in infrastructure and implementation of various national vaccination, disease prevention and family planning programmes had improved health care.

78. Education was free and compulsory for all children up to the age of 16. Major infrastructure, human and budgetary resources were being devoted to education. School attendance rates stood at 97.96 per cent for the 2011-2012 academic year, a rate equivalent to that of some developed countries, an indication that the "Education for All" goal had been achieved. Other Government measures were being taken with respect to student transport, school cafeterias, subsidizing of textbooks, and a recent 50 per cent increase in the school attendance benefit paid to low-income families.

79. **Ms. Velichko** (Belarus) said that effectively coordinating the mobilization of resources for children required a united effort by Governments, international organizations, non-governmental structures and the private sector.

80. Her delegation welcomed the importance attached in the 2011 UNICEF report "The State of the World's Children: Adolescence — an Age of Opportunity" to investing in support for adolescents so that they could realize their potential. To that end, combating social degradation of youth and early identification of talented youth, both of which were included in the initiative put forward by Belarus at the 2010 United Nations summit for a global partnership on education, could usefully be incorporated in the operational activities of the United Nations system.

81. The recent more active participation of children and youth in giving effect to the rights of the child was a welcome development. Recent experience indicated a need to review the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, update its priorities to include such issues as migration, the financial and economic crisis and trafficking in people, and establish an effective mechanism to coordinate its implementation.

82. Belarusian legislation guaranteed the rights and freedoms of all children, and paid special attention to orphans, children without parental support, children with disabilities and those living in areas affected by the Chernobyl accident. The Government conscientiously fulfilled its obligations under international instruments on the rights of the child, and was currently working to implement the recommendations made by the Committee on the Rights of the Child following its review in January 2011 of the periodic report of Belarus. It had also invited the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography to visit the country.

83. **Mr. Medina** (Peru) said that his country ascribed particular importance to improving the situation of children with disabilities, via implementation of plans and programs to facilitate their complete inclusion. Educational mainstreaming was to be given priority, and a budget line existed to increase the percentages of children with disabilities enrolled in regular primary education.

84. Actions to support the social and human development of children in indigenous communities in rural areas, the High Andes, and the Amazonian regions of Peru, the most disadvantaged population groups, was necessary. Peru had made considerable progress in reduction of chronic malnutrition, child mortality and mother-child health services.

85. Major investment in education had made it possible to achieve universal primary education. The National Mobilization for Literacy Program had eradicated illiteracy in the under-15 population.

86. Peru had been making efforts to integrate information and communication technologies into education in order to improve quality and equity. The "One laptop per child" program was aimed at improving the quality of public primary education in remote, extremely poor rural areas. A "Pedagogical Innovation Classroom" programme was designed to gradually introduce information and communication technologies into the teaching/learning process. The *Cuna Más* programme provided food, early childhood education, and child care for children under three whose mothers were working.

87. **Mr. Ahmad** (Pakistan) said that in June 2011, Pakistan had ratified the Optional Protocol on Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography. Work on ratification of the Protocol on Children in

Armed Conflict was at an advanced stage. Periodic reports had been submitted to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities had been ratified.

88. Pakistan had a comprehensive National Plan of Action for Children and a National Commission for Child Welfare and Development dedicated to promoting implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and assessing the impact of law on the welfare and development of children. Child Welfare and Development Commissions operated at provincial and district levels.

89. A number of national child welfare and protection projects had been undertaken, many of them in partnership with United Nations agencies. The Provincial Governments were undertaking legislative and administrative measures for child welfare and protection in the provinces. Children's Complaint Desks had been established in the Federal and Provincial Ombudsmen's Offices, and a Child Protection Management Information System had been set up in collaboration with UNICEF.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.